

Interactive word walls

(K. Cooter, 2007)

A word wall is a systematically organized collection of words displayed in large letters on a wall or other large display place in the classroom. It is a tool to use, not just display. Word walls are designed to promote group learning and be shared by a classroom of children.

Guidelines

- Add words gradually, five a week
- Make words very accessible by putting them where every student can see them, writing them in big, black letters, and using a variety of background colors so that the most often-confused words (there, their; what, when) are different colors
- Be selective about what words go on the wall, limiting additions to those really common words which children use a lot in writing
- Practice those words by chanting and writing them
- Do a variety of review activities to provide enough practice so that words are read and spelled instantly and automatically
- Make sure that Word Wall words are spelled correctly in any writing students do

In the Library

- Use nouns generally
- Plan a variety of activities in duos or trios with the words
- Use maps and words together or graphs and words together
- Due to room size, use large print but not block print
- Use only two colors on white

Activity 1 Clap, Chant, Write--Introduction of New Words

Teacher introduces 5 Word Wall words per week by having students:

- see the words
 - say the words
 - chant the words (snap, clap, stomp, cheer)
 - write the words and check them together with the teacher
 - trace around the words and check together with the teacher
1. Have the students number a sheet of paper 1-5.
 2. Place one of the 5 new word cards in the pocket chart. Say the word, use the word in a sentence, have students write the word on their paper. Continue with 4 additional words.
 3. When all five words have been written, point to the words and have the students clap and chant the spelling of the words.
 4. Students use a red pen, marker or crayon to trace around the word.
 5. On the following days of the week, teacher practices the new Word Wall words and reviews previous words with practice activities.

Sigmon, C. (1997). 4-Blocks Literacy Model. N.C.: Carson Dellosa Publishing.

Activity 2 Rhyme with the Word Wall

The teacher says a sentence that contains a word that rhymes with one of the Word Wall words and is spelled with the same pattern. Children must decide which word rhymes and how to spell it.

1. Students number their paper just as they do for Clap, Chant, Write, 1-5
2. The teacher gives the following clues for the lessons words.
Number one begins with a t and rhymes with walk
Student writes talk on paper
Number two begins with an m and rhymes with by
Student writes my on paper
Number three begins with an f and rhymes with end
Student writes friend on paper
Number four begins with a w and rhymes with bear
Student writes wear on paper
Number five begins with a f and rhymes with car
Student writes far on paper
3. To check the answers, teacher says the rhyming word and lets students say the word they wrote and chant its spelling.

Cunningham, P.M. (1999). The Teacher's Guide to the Four Blocks. N.C.: Carson-Dellosa.

Activity 3 Review Endings

This activity helps children learn to spell word Wall words which need an ending.

1. Students number their papers 1-5.
2. Teacher calls a word that can have an ending added to it. Begin with just one ending for lesson. Then add additional endings in separate lessons. Then combine them so that children are listening for all the endings.
Jumping, The frog is jumping over the log, jumping
Student writes jumping on paper.
3. Ask what word wall word was used with an ending. Say the word and chant its spelling.
4. Continue in same manner with 4 additional words.
Looking, I am looking at a new book, looking.
Student writes looking on paper.
Called, She called her mom on the phone, called.
Student writes called on paper.
Taking, We are taking a trip to St. Louis, taking.
Student writes taking on paper
Tells, My teacher tells good stories, tells.
Student writes tells on paper.

Cunningham, P.M. (1999). The Teacher's Guide to the Four Blocks. N.C.: Carson-Dellosa.

Activity 4 Rapid reading

Research tells us that fluency can and should be practiced with familiar words. Have pairs of children work together. One child uses a pointer and goes down or across the column. The other child reads. Or the child can take a copy of the word wall home and practice fluency with their family – put words on the word refrigerator!

Activity 5 Cross-Checking

1. Call out several words that begin with the same letter for students to write on the front, such as these: went want was what where. Tell students that they will have to decide which word from the front makes sense in the sentence.
2. Say a sentence leaving out one of the words.
3. Students decide which word makes sense and write it on paper.
4. Say and spell the word.
5. Do 4 additional sentences.

Cunningham, P.M. (1999). *The Teacher's Guide to the Four Blocks*. N.C.:Carson-Dellosa.

Activity 6 Make Sentences

1.Dictate a sentence using several of the word wall words:

Josh will come to my house to play.

2.Students listen as you repeat the whole sentence.

3.Then repeat the sentence one word at a time, giving students plenty of time to find the words on the word wall and write them.

Remind children to begin sentences with a capital letter. Have days when you dictate questions and exclamatory sentences. It's fun to use students' names in the sentences. Students also like to dictate sentences using lots of words from the word wall.

Cunningham, P.M. (1995). *Phonics They Use*. N.Y.: Harper Collins.

Activity 7 Be a Mind Reader

Be a Mind Reader – a class favorite! In this game, the teacher thinks of a word on the wall and then gives five clues to that word.

1. Have students number their paper 1-5 and tell them that you are going to see who can read your mind and figure out which of the words on the board you are thinking of. Tell them you will give them five clues. By the fifth clue, everyone should guess your word, but if they read your mind they might get it before the fifth clue.
2. For your first clue, always give the same clue:
"It's one of the words on the word wall."
3. Students should write next to number one the word they think it might be.
4. The second clue is:
It has four letters.
5. Student writes word.
6. The third clue is:
It begins with a digraph ph.
7. Student writes word
8. The fourth clue is:
It has a short e vowel sound.
9. Student writes the word.
10. The fifth clue is:
It begins the sentence: ____ will lunch be ready? when
11. "I know you all have word next to number 5, what is it? But who has it next to number 4?, 3?, 2?, 1?" Some students will have read your mind and have it. Do several words in the same manner. As students get familiar with this activity they like to be the person giving the clues and having their mind read.

Cunningham, P.M. (1999). *The Teacher's Guide to the Four Blocks*. N.C.:Carson-Dellosa.

Activity 8 Ruler Tap

1. Teacher chooses a word from the Word Wall.
2. Say the word, then tap and say several letters in that word but not the whole word: come, c-o
3. Call on a student to finish spelling the word out loud: m-e.
4. If the student correctly finishes spelling the word, that child gets to call out a word, tap and spell the word and call on another student to finish.
5. Do several additional words.
Variations of this activity could be, only the teacher having a ruler, all students having a ruler.

Cunningham, P.M. (1995). *Phonics They Use*. N.Y.: Harper Collins.

Activity 9 Bingo

You will need photocopies sheets of 9 or 25 blocks. Students will need objects to cover words.

1. Call on students to pick words from the wall they want included in the game.
2. As each word is picked, students will write it on their Bingo sheet in any blank block they choose and you will write it on an index card.
3. When all students have filled up their sheets you are ready to play.
4. Shuffle your index cards and call the words one at a time.
5. Have students chant the spelling of each word and then cover it with their object.
6. The first student to have a complete row covered wins Bingo.
7. Students can clear their sheets and play again.

Cunningham, P.M. (1995). *Phonics They Use*. N.Y.: Harper Collins.

Activity 10 Word Sorts

- Write 10-15 words on large index cards and place in a pocket chart.
- Have students write these words on separate smaller cards or papers at their desks.
- Have students sort the words into different piles depending on some features certain words share. Students may sort all words that begin with a certain sound, have a certain vowel sound, contain a certain blend or digraph.

Cunningham, P.M. (1995). *Phonics They Use*. N.Y.: Harper Collins.

Activity 11 Guess the Covered Word

The purpose of this activity is to help children practice the important strategy of cross-checking meaning with letter-sound information.

1. The teacher writes 4 or 5 sentences on board, sentence strips, or overhead. Cover a word in each sentence with two sticky notes--one covering the onset, the other covering the rime.
2. Call on a student to read the first sentence.
3. Students make several guesses for the covered word. Teacher writes the guesses on the board.
4. The teacher takes off the first sticky note that is covering the onset.
5. Guesses that don't begin with that onset are erased and any new guesses can be added.
6. When all the guesses which fit both the meaning and the onset are written, the whole word is revealed.

Cunningham, P.M. (1999). *The Teacher's Guide to the Four Blocks*. N.C.:Carson-Dellosa.

Activity 12 Build/Mix/Fix

1. Teacher calls 5 words from the word wall one at a time. Students chant and write on paper as teacher writes on board.
2. Teacher directs class to **Build** the first word with letter tiles/cards at desk.
3. After all students have the word built, teacher directs class to **Mix** up the letters of the word.
4. Students are directed to **Fix** the word by arranging the letters to spell the word.
5. Chant the word.
6. Continue with remaining words.

Fountas, I.C. Pinnell, G.S.: (1998)*Word Matters*. N.H. Heinemann.

Activity 13 Word Search

<http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com/WordSearchSetupForm.html>

1. Create a Word Search worksheet to each student
2. Teacher chooses 5 words from the word wall.
3. As teacher calls out word, students chant and write on blank at bottom of worksheet.
4. When each word is found, trace around it with a colored pencil, pen or marker or use a highlighter to highlight the word found.

Fountas, I.C. Pinnell, G.S.: (1998) *Word Matters*. N.H. Heinemann.

Activity 14 Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check

- Take a paper with three or four columns.
- Teacher calls out 5 word wall words.
- Students write the list of words in the first column.
- Begin with the first word. SAY it and notice parts to remember.
- LOOK closely at the letters to notice the visual details.
- COVER the word with a card and think about how the word looks.
- WRITE the word from memory.
- Uncover and CHECK it with the word in the first column.
- Cover and write the word again and check.
- Do all five words.

Fountas, I.C. Pinnell, G.S.: (1998) Word Matters. N.H. Heinemann.

Activity 15 Flashlight Fun

1. Turn out the lights.
2. Say the poem together with the class:
Flashlight, flashlight, oh so bright,
Shine on a word with your light.
3. Shine the flashlight on individual words for the class to read and chant.

Gruber, B. (1998). Instant Word Wall High Frequency Words. CA:Practice & Learn Right Publications

Activity 16 Let's Cheer

1. Choose 5 words from the word wall.
2. Print each letter boldly on paper for each word.
3. Cheerleaders face the class holding the letter papers to spell the word.
4. Call out the first letter of the word.
5. The student holding that letter steps forward and raises the letter paper as the class says the letter.
6. Continue until the entire word has been spelled.
7. Say the word 3 times in unison.
8. Take turns being cheerleaders and spelling the rest of the words.

Gruber, B. (1998). Instant Word Wall High Frequency Words. CA:Practice & Learn Right Publications

Activity 17 Word Fun Center

1. Teacher chooses 5 words from the word wall and writes them on the board.
2. Divide the students into 6 groups.
3. Each group is given a different center material to spell the words.

- *painted lima beans
- *letter tiles
- *pasta
- *letter/object tray
- *stencils
- *Wikki Sticks
- *play-do
- *alphabet stamps
- *magnetic letters

Gruber, B. (1998). Instant Word Wall High Frequency Words. CA:Practice & Learn Right Publications

Activity 18 Hopscotch

1. Make a hopscotch on the classroom floor with tape, or on the playground with chalk.
2. Choose a word wall word and write one letter in each box of the hopscotch and the whole word at the top.
3. Students hop and say each letter to spell the word and then say the word at the end.
4. Do for additional words.

Gruber, B. (1998). Instant Word Wall High Frequency Words. CA:Practice & Learn Right Publications

Activity 19 Wet Words

1. Teacher chooses 5 word wall words.
2. Say word to class and have them chant.
3. Write on individual chalkboard one letter at a time with paintbrush and water.
4. Continue with additional words.

Gruber, B. (1998). Instant Word Wall High Frequency Words. CA:Practice & Learn Right Publications

Activity 20 Word Jar

1. When 5 new word wall words are introduced, write them on a slip of paper and add to Word Jar.
2. Choose 5 students to pick a word from the jar.
3. One student at a time reads their word, class chants the spelling.
4. Do additional words.

Gruber, B. (1998). Instant Word Wall High Frequency Words. CA:Practice & Learn Right Publications

Activity 21 Rainbow Words

1. Pass out paper to each student.
2. Teacher chooses 5 word wall words.
3. As teacher says word, students chant and write on paper with a crayon.
4. Do the same for the additional words.
5. After all the words have been written once with a crayon, students go back and write each word again with 2 different colors of crayons.

Gruber, B. (1998). Instant Word Wall High Frequency Words. CA:Practice & Learn Right Publications

Activity 22 Word Wall Chain

1. Pass out 5 colored strips of paper to each student, size 1x5.
2. Have one student choose a word wall word and everyone writes and chants that word-- each.
3. Call on another student to find a word wall word that starts with the last letter of the first word. Students write and chant it-- each-her.
4. Call on additional students to continue finding words that start with the last letter of the previous word.
5. Glue the strips together to make a chain.

Gruber, B. (1998). Instant Word Wall High Frequency Words. CA:Practice & Learn Right Publications

Activity 23 Current Events Word Wall

1. Put up a map- the world or the Middle East I would suggest.
2. Using yarn, target the areas or countries and attach a string of yarn to the map.
3. Create a card with the name of the country and a number and attach to the yarn
4. Cover the label with a sticky and have the children guess which country is which with a worksheet numbered 1-10 or with the number of yarn cards you have placed on the wall.
5. Declare a winner.

Activity 24 Word Wall Match

<http://www.freevocabulary.com/>

1. Using complex words such as ACT/SAT words create a word wall with synonyms and antonyms of selected words.
2. Put the SAT/ACT words printed in red in one column and the others printed in blue randomly on a chart.
3. Have the students create word triads using one word from the red and two blues.
4. Have them check their work from your master list.

[http:// www.majortests.com](http://www.majortests.com)

Activity 25 Analogies

<http://www.freevocabulary.com/>

1. Using SAT/ACT words create a variety of analogies such as defeat is to battle and failure is to _____ with the word to fill the blank from the list.
2. The student can then come up with their own and discuss their thinking.